

From Domestic Farce to Abolitionist Satire: Reinhold Solger's Reframing of the Union (1860)

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THE HON. ANODYNE HUMDRUM; or, *The Union Must and Shall be Preserved* (1860), written by forty-eight-year-old and journalist Reinhold Solger (1817–66) seven years after he emigrated to the United States, offers scholars an opportunity to examine the process by which a German-American writer took up his own German cultural material — in this case *Der Reichstagsprofessor: Posse in einem Akt* (The Professor in the Parliament: Farce in One Act, 1850) — and transferred it to a different national context.¹ Solger shifted the setting of his play from the German territories to the United States, the time from 1850 to 1860, the political issue from the failed revolution of 1848–1849 to the institution of slavery, and the language from German to English. This essay will explore how this transformation changed the nature and intent of the adapted drama, despite the similarities it bears to the original play in terms of plot and humor. In reframing the ideas and values depicted in his German comedy, the immigrant writer created a new literary satire that not only commented on but also sought to inform and influence political developments in the United States. This essay concludes with an annotated reproduction of the final scene of Solger's English-language play. With its emphasis on politics rather than the requisite happy ending, this scene best reveals the significant changes Solger made in reimagining his original drama.

In March 1848, when revolutionaries throughout the German states demanded reforms such as liberal governments, an end to censorship, and the abolishment of feudal privileges, the parliament of Baden made numerous political concessions. Radicals in this southwestern region remained dissatisfied, however, and continued their revolutionary activities; in June 1849 they convened a state assembly and charged it with drafting a constitution. The assembly's agenda quickly changed when Prussian troops marched into the Palatinate, a neighbor and ally of Baden, on 12 June; delegates appointed Ludwig Mieroslawski (1814–1878), a Polish general who had led his country's unsuccessful uprising against the Russians in 1830, as commander of Baden's revolutionary army. Solger, serving as the general's

translator and adjutant, participated in the army's ill-fated revolt against Prussian troops at Waghäusel later that month. Their defeat, which marked the final revolutionary episode of 1848–1849, signaled the reestablishment of reactionary power in the German territories.² To avoid capture, Solger fled to Switzerland in July with his fellow soldiers. While living in exile in Zurich during the winter of 1849–1850, Solger helped establish the *Deutsche Monatsschrift für Politik, Wissenschaft, Kunst und Leben* (German Monthly Journal for Politics, Science, Art, and Life), which served as a mouthpiece for exiled radical Democrats.³ *Der Reichstagsprofessor*, the only literary text Solger contributed to the journal, appeared anonymously in the October 1850 issue.

Surprisingly little has been written about Solger's farce, a humorous critique of the German National Assembly's failure to create a unified nation state based on popular sovereignty, even though the Young Hegelian literary historian Hermann Hettner lauded it as the best example of political comedy he knew.⁴ In 1971 Horst Denkler included an annotated version of the text in his anthology of political comedies issuing from the revolution of 1848–1849, in part to save it from obscurity; he comments that Solger's play no doubt would have found a large audience if it had not been buried by the counterrevolution.⁵ The burial imagery proves apt, for the fate of *Der Reichstagsprofessor* appears to have been linked to that of the *Deutsche Monatsschrift*: Prussia banned the periodical on 11 November 1850. Other states soon followed suit, forcing the periodical to cease publication in June 1851.

Solger settled in Boston after emigrating to the United States in 1853. Like many forty-eighters, he became a vocal opponent of slavery and a supporter of the emerging Republican Party, even stumping for Abraham Lincoln during the presidential campaign of 1860.⁶ In that year he also reworked his German-language play to create *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum*, a satire about the increasingly divisive issue of slavery. Although no longer constrained by the censorship laws promulgated in the German territories after the revolution of 1848–1849, Solger published his second comedy in Boston under the pseudonym "Aristophanes Junior," thus placing it in the comic tradition of the Athenian dramatist.⁷ According to Friedrich Kapp, Solger's chief biographer, theater directors thwarted the author's plans to have his comedy performed because a male African-American could not appear on stage with a white man, even in New York.⁸ Jerry Schuchalter suggests that Solger refused to acknowledge the political constraints and taboos of American culture and thus "doomed himself to political inefficacy."⁹ Solger's second play, like his first, fell into oblivion. Indeed, it proved difficult to locate a copy of *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum*; it has never been reprinted, and neither Kapp nor subsequent scholars mention whether the play originally appeared as a book or perhaps serialized in a newspaper or journal. Currently the comedy is available only at the Library of Congress.¹⁰

The two comedies share the same basic plot. A spirited, beautiful young woman faces an arranged marriage with a man she has never met. The woman's guardian has deemed him an excellent potential husband because of his prominence within the guardian's political party of choice. Predictably, the woman's true love interest lies elsewhere, with a man committed to more radical politics. On the day before she comes of age, her lover pays an unexpected visit; her intended husband arrives that same evening, bruised and jittery after being kicked and tormented by the local police. All kinds of humorous situations then arise: the well-intentioned meddling of a saucy servant, attempted rescues and escapes through a bedroom window, and mistaken identities resulting from overcoats switched in the dark. With the insistent, albeit inept help of the local authorities, coats, people, and relationships are eventually sorted out to the satisfaction of the young woman, to the disappointment of her guardian, and to the disgrace of the guardian's political hero. As we shall see, the imminent marriages and the ramifications of these unions reveal much about Solger's political views and the intent of these two literary works.

Solger anchors the plot of each drama firmly within the context of contemporary political developments. His original text comments specifically on what German historian Thomas Nipperdey refers to as the curious epilogue to the revolution of 1848–1849.¹¹ When Frederick William IV, the Prussian king, refused the crown of a “small German” empire offered to him in April 1849 by the constituent assembly in Frankfurt, he shattered nationalist hopes of a constitutional state. He then pursued his own goal of establishing a “small Germany” under Prussian auspices that would maintain a separate alliance with Austria. In May 1849 Prussia, Saxony, and Hanover formed an alliance (or *Union*, as it came to be called) for this purpose. The large states of Bavaria and Württemberg rejected the plan outright, and by early 1850 even Saxony and Hanover had switched their allegiances to Austria. Delegates who had been elected to the Erfurt Parliament still convened in March 1850, quickly ratifying a constitution that reflected the king's wishes. Ultimately fearing a complete break with Austria, however, Frederick William IV abandoned his political strategy and on 29 November 1850 signed the Punctation of Olmütz with Austria, thereby bowing to Austrian pressure and accepting that country's plan to reconstitute the German Confederation of 1815.

The title of the original play immediately establishes a connection to this historical material; “Reichstagsprofessor” refers to the fictional character Professor Duselmann, a delegate from the Gotha Party serving in the Erfurt Parliament and a former member of the German National Assembly. Duselmann is a satiric figure based on Karl Biedermann, a professor of history in Leipzig who, while a representative in the National Assembly, participated in the delegation that offered Frederick William IV the crown.¹² His telling name, moreover, hints at how the professor approaches his task

in Erfurt: *duseln* means “to doze.” Solger extends his criticism to Mr. Heuler, an enthusiastic supporter of Duselmann’s party, as evidenced in part by the name he gives this character: during the 1840s, those on the left end of the political spectrum applied the term *Heuler* (howler) to the liberal bourgeoisie and also to reactionary conservatives who supported the politics of the Prussian king.¹³ Having promised the professor the hand of his niece, Amalie, as soon as the men in Erfurt achieve German unification, Heuler remains convinced of their imminent success. Indeed, he believes the marriage will actually help bring about German unification and that he, a simple citizen of Berlin (as one sees from his dialect), will then be joined forever with the best men of Germany, “als Bejrinder von Deutschlands Jreße un Eunigkeit” (R 402; as a founder of Germany’s greatness and unity). Duselmann responds to Heuler’s profuse praise with a similarly hyperbolic and misguided assessment of the Erfurt Parliament, claiming that it is destined to lead both the princes and the people of Germany to greatness.

For those characters representing the far left end of the political spectrum — Amalie; her lover Oertel, a radical republican who served as a delegate to the National Assembly in Frankfurt; and her maid Hanne — Duselmann serves as an object of ridicule. Amalie has disparaged the professor even before he arrives in Berlin, claiming that he and the other members of his party will never learn anything because they are academics.¹⁴ Oertel is willing to risk arrest in order to help Amalie run away and avoid marrying the “Schwachkopf” (R 397, idiot), and Hanne, in her colorful Berlin dialect, calls him an “abgetakelte Reichsjerippe” (R 401; dismantled skeleton of the German Reich) and an “alter ausjemerjelter ejiptischer Reichsmumie” (R 411; old, exhausted Egyptian imperial mummy). When Duselmann arrives at Heuler’s home, late and disheveled, he explains that the police, mistaking him for Oertel, had called him a despicable revolutionary rogue, kicked him repeatedly, and thrown him briefly in jail. His ineffectual response to this brutality consisted of declaring that he protested, that he protested energetically, and that he protested most energetically. Heuler praises Duselmann’s handling of the incident, but Hanne creates mischief by suggesting to Heuler that their guest might actually be Oertel. Later that night the police catch Duselmann again, this time while he is climbing out a window (to flee from Oertel, who had entered through the window in search of Amalie). Convinced that an extensive democratic plot exists to destroy his entire political party and indignant at being confused with his political rival, the professor declares that he would rather be caught posing as a court jester. An officer then exposes the irony of this comment by sarcastically suggesting that Duselmann was doing precisely that in Erfurt.

Solger’s condemnation of Prussia’s role not only in suppressing the revolutionary movements of 1848–1849 but also in attempting to establish

a German Union in 1850 becomes particularly evident at the conclusion of the play. Oertel, disguised in the professor's coat and wig, has convinced Heuler that he is Duselmann. Once Duselmann snatches and dons the wig, however, the police recognize him as "der liederliche Jotha'sche Reichsvagabunde, der alle 5 Minuten arretirt is" (R 425; the slovenly German vagabond from the Gotha Party who's arrested every five minutes). A detective announces that Oertel will not be prosecuted for his involvement with the German National Assembly as long as he agrees to leave Berlin, but Duselmann does not fare as well. Under duress, he first must promise to remove himself from politics completely and then submit to being paraded through town without his wig, as evidence of his invalidity. This leaves Heuler wondering who will marry his niece. At the end of the play the clock strikes midnight, and Oertel reminds him that Amalie has just come of age. Significantly, the republican has the final word: "Und mit *ihr* [der Zeit] führen wir doch zuletzt die Braut heim" (R 429; and in time we will indeed bring home the bride).

The requisite happy ending thus appears to be assured. Amalie, the bride to which Oertel refers, symbolizes the revolutionaries' goal of a unified Germany based on popular sovereignty. Her rejection of Professor Duselmann and his politics signifies Solger's rejection of Prussian efforts to maintain hegemony in German affairs. Solger wrote this drama with the advantage of hindsight. He already knew, for example, that the revolutionaries who shared his own political convictions had failed to prevent the reemergence of reactionary forces in the German states. Oertel's triumph at the end of the play thus rings hollow. Frederick William IV had not yet signed the Punctuation of Olmütz when Solger's play appeared in the *Deutsche Monatsschrift*, but Prussia's lack of commitment to its Union politics and the growing tension with Austria during the summer of 1850 perhaps convinced the author that Erfurt was a lost cause, too. Solger suggests that Prussian hegemony represented an unlikely and also undesirable option for Germany's future. Oertel, like many of his fellow revolutionaries (and the author himself), must live in exile, where he could hardly hope to influence post-revolutionary political developments in Berlin. As Denkler correctly concludes, Solger did not intend to reinvigorate the revolutionary cause with *Der Reichstagsprofessor*.¹⁵ Instead, he offered his drama as critical commentary on the outcome of the 1848–1849 revolution.

The expansion of slavery into the western territories and the presidential election of 1860 provide the historical context for Solger's second play.¹⁶ Stephen A. Douglas, a Democratic senator from Illinois, had been instrumental in securing congressional approval for the Compromise of 1850, which allowed residents of a territory, like those of a state, to vote on whether or not to exclude slavery. The Compromise also included the Fugitive Slave Act, which aimed to keep Northerners from interfering with the capture and return of fugitive slaves. Douglas, who believed the

compromise would help his party avoid sectional division, also introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Signed into law in May of that year, it nullified the geographical restrictions to slavery established by the Missouri Compromise of 1820 (none north of the 36°30' line of latitude). Instead of settling the issue of slavery in the Great Plains, however, the law sharpened the conflict between proslavery and antislavery forces. Abolitionist acts such as John Brown's unsuccessful raid at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in October 1859 also increased tensions. The debate over slavery, moreover, generated changes within the political party system. The Democrats nominated Douglas as their presidential candidate for the election of 1860, but southern Democrats split from the party and nominated John C. Breckinridge. The Constitutional Union Party, founded in late 1859, nominated John Bell of Tennessee, and the Republican Party, established in 1854, put forth Abraham Lincoln as its nominee.¹⁷

The title character of Solger's second drama establishes the initial connection to these historical developments. The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum, a former senator, expects to become the presidential nominee of the Constitutional Union Party. Solger lampoons both John Bell and his party in the *Dramatis Personae*, presenting Humdrum as "unknown to the present generation; — hence luminary of the *Constitutional Union Party*." The politician's name, furthermore, conjures a dull, tedious person who has a soothing effect on the mind or feelings. The irony inherent in the name becomes even more apparent when the guardian in this story, the retired New England merchant Mr. Dough Olivebranch, praises Humdrum as "*the* orator of the country" (H 11). The subtitle of Solger's drama and Humdrum's mantra, "The Union Must and Shall be Preserved," refers to the platform of the Constitutional Union Party, "the Constitution, the Union, and the Laws."¹⁸

This context allows for a plot similar to, although more complicated, than that of *Der Reichstagsprofessor*. Olivebranch, a resident of Richmond, Virginia, wants his niece Emily to marry Humdrum, certain to be the next president of the United States. More independent than her German counterpart, Emily informs her uncle outright that she will marry Frank Sterling, the editor of a Republican newspaper; she agrees to wait until she comes of age the next day, however, and to marry only with her uncle's consent. (Sterling's name, which suggests a person of excellent character, already signals Solger's unequivocal choice of husband for Emily.) When Sterling secretly visits Emily that evening, Humdrum also arrives; like Duselmann, he has been kicked at the train station, mistaken as a Northerner intent on inciting a negro insurrection. Like Duselmann, he barely protested this mistreatment; to the contrary, he claims he rather liked it, out of principle: "Whosoever likes to be kicked, is a Constitutional Union man; and whosoever objects to being kicked, is a Disunionst!" (H 26). Solger thus ridicules Humdrum for his eagerness to appease political

opponents, a trait he attributes to other members of the Constitutional Union Party as well: the name of Humdrum's biggest fan, Olivebranch, recalls a symbol of conciliation. Humdrum is awakened later that night not by Sterling but by Sambo, the coachman, who climbs through a window to fetch Sally, a female slave in Olivebranch's household, and escape with her to the North; Humdrum flees, only to be captured by members of the Vigilance Committee. In a parody of Southerners tracking fugitive slaves in the North, they promptly put him on trial for invading Virginia to murder the white population and run off with their slaves.¹⁹

Before discussing the final scene of this drama, it will prove useful to examine the changes Solger made when transferring his original play to a new national context. *Der Reichstagsprofessor* has one act divided into twenty-two brief scenes; each scene marks a new combination of characters on stage. In accordance with the unities of time, place, and action, the entire play takes place within a couple of hours, in one room of Heuler's home, and with no subplots; the room has three doors and a window that functions like a door, thus allowing for the many entrances and exits typical of farce.²⁰ In contrast, *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* has two acts, with the second comprising three scenes. This more elaborated dramatic form, along with more extensive stage directions, may support Kapp's claim that Solger planned to see the drama performed on stage. While most of the play takes place in Olivebranch's home (in a sitting room, also with three doors and a window), the first and third scenes in act two are set in a public square. Changes in setting allow Solger to expand the significance of the issues he addresses beyond domestic confines to a public arena, suggesting that the author perceived the political climate in the United States to be more open, given the absence of censorship laws, than the one he had experienced in the German territories.

Solger evokes the local setting of the original play largely through the Berlin dialect spoken by Hanne and Heuler, although readers also would have recognized the veiled and not-so-veiled references made throughout the play to Frederick William IV and other residents of the Prussian capital. The importance he attaches to the local setting of the second play — Richmond, Virginia — is more pronounced. He suggests the locality in part through the Southern dialect spoken by the slaves. Virginians in the play acknowledge their state's important history as one of the original colonies, referring to it as "Old Dominion" and the "mother of statesmen."²¹ Solger also incorporates into his text references to current events that took place in Virginia. In January 1860, for example, the state legislature of South Carolina dispatched a special commissioner to Virginia to propose that the two states cooperate in matters of common defense; this incident surfaces in the final scene, when an aide-de-camp announces to the governor the arrival of a telegram in which "The Empire of South Carolina" offers her services to help Virginia "repel the Northern invasion" (*H* 39).²²

The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum has a more extensive list of characters than its German predecessor, which contributes to a richer, more complex and inclusive, and — given the telling names of most persons — more humorous picture of the local political scene. The five central characters in the original play have counterparts in this text: Olivebranch and his niece Emily, Sally, Humdrum, and Sterling. The list of characters in the English-language drama also includes an additional servant, the slave Sambo; Governor Whizz of Virginia, presented as a “Southern Don Quixote” who espouses the expansion of slavery into the territories and the protection of Southern rights; and the Hon. Stephen Patrick McDougal, the Democratic candidate for the presidency and a caricature of Stephen A. Douglas. General Cockup commands the Richmond Vigilance Committee, and Jezebel Tawney and Jim Snarles, as leaders of the Richmond Democracy, represent Southern Democrats and their extreme proslavery stance. The two additional scenes that take place in the public square also include additional members of the Vigilance Committee, Governor’s Guard, and a crowd.²³

Let us now turn to the final scene of *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum*. Emily comes of age not at the very end of the play, but in the second scene of act two. At midnight, Emily finds her uncle speaking amicably with Sterling; unaware that the Republican is posing as Humdrum, she is shocked by what she perceives to be her lover’s hypocrisy. She ends the relationship and storms out of the room. The love story nearly gets lost amidst the ensuing developments in the play’s final scene; indeed, it resurfaces only at the very end of the play. The last scene focuses instead on contemporary politics, in particular on the presidential election of 1860. Solger begins the scene with a heated debate between McDougal, who defends the concept of popular sovereignty, and the governor, who insists that slavery has the right to exist and be protected throughout the Union. When Humdrum enters the fray with his usual “The Union must and shall be preserved,” Sterling introduces some semblance of order and justice by insisting that Humdrum — still thought to be a Northern abolitionist planning on inciting a Negro insurrection — be given a fair trial. Once the true identities of both gentlemen are revealed, Sterling gives a rousing speech, urging those gathered “to preserve intact the institutions and the area consecrated to liberty by our fathers” (*H* 56). This passage, which contrasts sharply with Duselmann’s indirect references to speeches made by the Prussian king, echoes the attacks on the expansion of slavery that Lincoln made during his seven debates with Stephen A. Douglas.²⁴ The speech wins over the crowd and also Emily. The couple is allowed to depart, while Humdrum’s life is spared in exchange for his promise to eschew all political activity, “to evaporate entirely” (*H* 58), much like the Constitutional Union Party would do by the election in November of that year.

The conclusion of *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* suggests that Solger intended his drama to provide instructive commentary on current political events. He sought to present readers with a clearly defined and viable option for their own political involvement and the future of the United States, namely Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party. The final lines of the play offer a clarity of criticism not found in *Der Reichstagsprofessor*. As the train departs for the North, Emily and Sally wave their handkerchiefs, Sterling transforms Humdrum's worn phrase into a fresh Republican slogan, and Sambo, sitting on top of the train, thumbs his nose at two Southern white men: Humdrum and McDougal, the presidential candidates of the Constitutional Union and Democratic parties. This invitation to political activism at the conclusion of the play contrasts sharply with the resignation that marks the end of the earlier drama, reflecting the author's shift to a national context with political possibility.

Solger's drama differs considerably from much German-American literature of the nineteenth century. Unlike Heinrich Börnstein's novel, *Die Geheimnisse von St. Louis* (The Mysteries of St. Louis, 1851), for example, Solger's play is not concerned with the German immigrant experience. His characters are not even German-Americans.²⁵ In this respect *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* also differs considerably from Solger's own novel, *Anton in Amerika: Novelle aus dem deutsch-amerikanischen Leben* (Anton in America: Novella from German-American Life, 1862), which depicts the adventures of a naïve but well-meaning German immigrant who arrives in New York in 1857.²⁶ As a product of German immigration, Solger's antislavery drama bears more resemblance to Franz Lieber's *Encyclopedia Americana*; as Gerhard Weiss writes in the present volume, this project represents not a translation of the German *Conversations-Lexikon* but a transformation, or "Americanization," of the original German material, one that reflects the author's evolving relationship to the new culture.²⁷

Evidence of German authorship in *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* (apart from the fact that Solger uses his own German text as the basis for the play) can be found only in the small number of transfer effects evident in his English text. Traces of Solger's native language that surface include Germanisms such as "confirms me in my suspicions" (H 13; bestätigt mich in meinem Verdacht) and "falls forward on his nose" (H 49; er fällt auf die Nase). The writer sometimes selects an incorrect synonym: "the stranger's room" instead of "guest room" (H 14). The dialect spoken by the slaves, furthermore, suggests that he drew on the German habit of pronouncing "wh" as "v": "Ven I turn off de gas!" (H 17) or "Vere young gemman goes" (H 59). In one instance he makes a grammatical error often made by German-speaking learners of English, probably in order to preserve the parallel construction: "I like to hear a man talk — next to have him hung" (H 57; instead of "next to having him hung").

Such transfer effects by no means detract from the enormous creativity evident in Solger's use of the English language. On the contrary, they provide evidence — as does the entire play — of the contribution made by this particular German-American writer to the rich multilingual heritage of the United States.²⁸ The name of one character, referred to in the play as Judge Jezebel Tawney, illustrates especially well his skill in achieving subtle irony. Tawney lampoons Roger B. Taney, the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court who wrote the majority opinion in the *Scott vs. Sanford* (Dred Scott) case in 1857. Taney argued that black Americans descended from slaves could never become citizens of the United States and that Congress did not possess the power to exclude slavery from the territories.²⁹ Solger transformed Taney's name in a way that highlights the very issue (skin color) that Taney attacked, and hence the reason for Solger's negative portrayal of the justice: "to make tawny" means to bronze or tan.

In broad terms, both *Der Reichstagsprofessor* and *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* focus on the struggle for a union: the creation of a German nation state in the former, and the preservation of a United States increasingly torn apart by the institution of slavery in the latter. The German states in 1850 had just experienced violent upheaval, while the United States in 1860 was on the brink of war, but both conflicts resulted in part from attempts to enfranchise a group hitherto excluded from participating in society and to extend to those people the rights afforded by democracy. In each drama, furthermore, the author demonstrates that his sympathies lie with the Republicans — the radical German revolutionaries and the followers of Abraham Lincoln — who figure prominently in each respective play.

As the outcome of the presidential election in 1860 and the Civil War in 1865 would demonstrate, however, Solger's political involvement in the United States was with the victors. Furthermore, he wrote *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* not while living in exile, but while residing in the United States, a circumstance that afforded him immediacy, in both a geographic and a temporal sense, to the current events he commented upon — a luxury he did not necessarily have when writing his original drama. We may not be able to draw conclusions on the basis of *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* alone about the degree to which Solger had assimilated after emigrating to the United States, but his play does provide evidence of a high degree of immersion in and engagement with the politics of the United States. *The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum* reveals how Solger significantly transformed the nature and intent of *Der Reichstagsprofessor* by transferring his German literary text to a new national setting.

**The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum; or,
 The Union Must and Shall be Preserved.
 A Farce, in Two Acts.
 Reinhold Solger**

Scene III

Public Square, as in the first Scene of Act II.

GOV. WHIZZ and Senator STEPHEN PATRICK MCDUGAL *discovered standing on the opposite boxes, with guards and friends respectively.* GEN. COCKUP, JIM SNARLES, JEZEBEL TAWNEY, CROWD.³⁰

McDougal: (haranguing the crowd). Let the people of each Territory decide for themselves, whether they want slavery or not. I say: *liberty* for the people to decide for themselves!

Crowd. (shouting.) Liberty for the people! McDougal's our president!

Gov. W. (haranguing.) Let the property of the Southern people be protected in the Territories as well as the property of the Northern people. I say: *equality* for all the citizens of the Union, or the Union is a failure.

Crowd. Equality for all the citizens of the Union! Whizz is our president!

McDougal. Friends and fellow-citizens, *equality* is a great principle; but *liberty* is a great principle too. I say: let us not only have *equality* but also *liberty*; let us not only have *liberty* but also *equality*. First: let the people of each territory decide whether they will exclude slavery or not; there's *liberty* for your Northern citizens. And then let the Supreme Court of the U.S. decide that they *can't* exclude slavery; there's *equality* for your Southern citizens. I cannot see for the world why, on such a platform I ought not to unite the votes of both North and South upon myself?

Crowd. Liberty and Equality! McDougal's our president!

Gov. W. Men of the South! will you hold your rights at the mercy of laws and courts of law which any day may fall under the control of the North? The right to hold slaves is a right inherent in human nature, a sacred and inalienable right altogether independent of and above any positive laws and enactments. I claim to hold and carry my slave property wheresoever I please, state or territory, land or sea, South or North, and I pledge myself to introduce negro slavery into the heart of the North!

Crowd. Liberty, equality, and negro slavery in the heart of the North! Whizz is our President!

McDougal. I do not doubt the gentleman's good intentions; I only ask how he'll do it? How will he make the North submit to it? Now, I pledge myself over head and ears, I *will* make the North submit to it. I will enact a *sedition* law, suppressing all declarations that slavery is wrong and ought

to be resisted, — shutting the public halls to any but pro slavery meetings, — placing the press and the pulpit under a pro-slavery censorship, — and establishing a system of espionage over the private expression of anti-slavery sentiments. That is what I pledge myself to; that is, you know what *I am* pledged to, over head and ears.

Crowd. Liberty, equality, and the sedition law! McDougal's our President!

Gov. W. Gentlemen of the South! To establish slavery all over the Union, under the false pretence of *law*, and by the thimble-rig of *popular sovereignty*, may do well enough for such a cross-breed of a pettifogger and greasy mechanic, as only the servile population of the North can spit forth. I am a Southern gentleman, born not to overreach, but to command; not to cheat, but to force the North into submission. And I hereby pledge myself I'll seize upon the treasury, get possession of the army and navy, and shiver the Union from turret to foundation stone. Perhaps the gentleman asks how I'll do it? I'll do it with ten men; with these my ten "Homespun's" I'll bring the North to submission.³¹

Crowd. Shiver the Union! Bring the North to submission! Governor Whizz's our president!

McDougal. And I'll make it criminal for the pulse of the North to beat, for the brains of the North to think, for the heart of the North to throb a pulsation, a thought, a throb of liberty! And how'll *I* do it? I'll do it by *law*, gentlemen!

Crowd. McDougal and the law!

Gov. W. And I'll burn the British fleet, seize upon Cuba and Canada, ally myself with Russia and Brazil, and ask Louis Napoleon to occupy the Ohio line.³² And how'll I do it? With these my *ten* Homespuns I'll do it.

McDougal. And I'll erase from the memory of the North, every cherished tradition of ancestral liberty, stifle its every moral instinct, and strike dead its every religious aspiration, after the better, the higher, the more humane, the more godlike! And how'll I do it? I'll pass a law against it, gentlemen!

Gov. W. And I'll make war upon the British Empire; upon all the five great powers, not to speak of the minor principalities of Europe. I'll conquer the whole of Africa, overthrow on my passage the Ottoman, Persian, Chinese and Japanese Empires, and come home by the Sandwich Islands, after having spread the blessings of slavery to the utmost limits of the earth, and having hewn its bright way through all the opposing legions — with these my *ten* Homespuns!³³

McDougal. And I'll cheat all human nature, and I'll cheat human history out of its course, and I'll cheat the divine reason out of its purpose, and I'll cheat the devil out of his due. Man, God, Devil — Earth, Heaven, and Hell! Time and Eternity! I'm in for it! I'm pledged to it! I'll cheat — I'll cheat them all. And how will I cheat them? By calling it *LAW*, gentlemen.

Crowd. Cheat, cheat, cheat! McDougal's our President!

Gov. W. And I'll make war upon all three kingdoms of Nature — the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral. War upon all creation, without exception. I'll spread the blessings of slavery beyond the stars, and through the infinitude of space — with these my ten Homespun.

Crowd. War — war — war! Whizz's our President!

McDougal. And I'll make war upon this blustering Southern braggart! And I'll fight him down from his box — together with his ten Homespun, or any number of them I'll fight, if he don't stop his insolent bragging.

Gov. W. Then, down with the rebel, the traitor, who pretends to set up as candidate for the presidency, against the permission of his Southern masters! Up, my ten Homespun, and at him!

(Sound of trumpets and drums beating. — General fight. — MCDUGAL attacked by the Homespun, throws them successively from his box, when the latter is suddenly overthrown from beneath by HUMDRUM. MCDUGAL falls forward on his nose.)

Enter OLIVEBRANCH and STERLING from Olivebranch's house. Shake hands. OLIVEBRANCH remains standing in his door, STERLING passes across the stage, both waving their hats to each other.

[Exit STERLING, R.]

Hum. *(jumps on McDougal's box, gesticulating violently for a hearing.)* I ask the floor, gentlemen! Gentlemen, but for one word!

Crowd. Silence! Hear him! Silence! Let him speak.

Hum. *(stretching out his hands. Expectant pause.)* The Union must and shall be preserved!

Crowd. Down with the Humbug! *(Fearful tumult, groans, hisses, laughter.)*

McDougal. *(rising from the ground.)* Who is this subversive individual?

Snarles. Why, it's Frank Sterling, the Helper-ite, who feloniously escaped lynching.³⁴ *(Draws near Humdrum, and so each of the following actors in his turn, until they group all around him.)*

Tawney. Why, it's Frank Sterling, the bloody abolitionist, who irreverently evaded being cut to chops, for contempt of Court.

Gov. W. *(descends from box and goes close to Hum.)* Why, it's Frank Sterling, the furious incendiary, who sacrilegiously invaded the majesty of Virginia!

Mr. Oli. And run off with my negro Sambo.

McDougal. *(eyeing him from head to foot.)* Ah, indeed! That's the notorious Frank Sterling, is it?

Hum. Gentlemen, I swear by the Mount Vernon Association, and by every other bond that holds our cherished Union together, I am *not* Frank Sterling, I am —³⁵

Gov. W. Silence! — in the presence of your Southern masters.

Snarles. Silence! — or we'll play genius of liberty with you again.³⁶

McDougal. This, then, is the famous higher-law fanatic, who figures at all the black republican, anti-union, anti-constitution, anti-law, anti-slavery meetings of Massachusetts!³⁷

Tawney. This is the prodigious villain who goes in for free soil, free land, free postage, free Kansas, free territories, free love, free press, free schools, free thought, free bran-bread!³⁸

Snarles. This is the horrible outcast who preaches abolitionism, teetotalism, spiritualism, mesmerism, communism, free Quakerism, Mormonism, Mahometanism, Paganism, Theodore Parkerism, Helperism, sectionalism, incendiarism, irrepressible-conflictism. —³⁹

Gov. W. And the most dangerous and detestable ism of all — ABE LINCOLNISM!⁴⁰ (*Clenches his fists.*)

McDougal. (*the same.*) Abe Lincolnism!

All. (*the same.*) Abe Lincolnism!

Mr. Oli. And who has run off with my negro Sambo.

Hum. (*enraged.*) I irresistible-conflictual! I Helper-istical! I sectional-istical! I Abe Lincolnistical! I Sterling! Sterling I Rather would I creep on my belly, and eat dirt all the days of my life!

McDougal. Do you mean me, Sir?

Hum. I don't mean anybody, sir, but myself, — the Honorable Anodyne Humdrum!

Mr. Oli. Now this really surpasses everything! Do you know sir, that the Hon. Anodyne Humdrum is here?

All. Is here? The Hon. Anodyne Humdrum here?

Hum. I?

Mr. Oli. No, not you; but Mr. Humdrum.

Snarles. He's arrived, then?

Hum. To be sure am I — arrived more than three hours since. (*aside.*) I wish I never had!

Tawney. G — d d — n you! You sha n't speak! You sha n't say one word.

Mr. Oli. He's not only arrived, but he's just about leaving again. I'll go and fetch him at once from the depot, if it's not too late.

[*Exit.*]

Gen. C. And I'll go and stop the cars, by order of the Vigilance Committee, and bring the Honorable Anodyne Humdrum here, to unmask this shameless imposter.

[*Exit.*]

Gov. W. Bring him here, by all means!

Hum. By all means. (*ironically.*) I shall be delighted to make his acquaintance! — Quite delighted, indeed.

McDougal. The hardened scamp seems to make fun of it all.

Re-enter MR. OLIVEBRANCH and GEN. COCKUP, with STERLING.

(EMILY, (*in traveling dress,*) and SALLY, appear at the window, and accompany the proceedings with appropriate gestures.)

Tawney. There he is! Somebody will be lynched now, at last.

All. There he is!

Gen. C. I have ordered the train to wait, in the name of the Vigilance Committee.

Mr. Oli. (*to Sterling.*) Excuse me, my dear Sir, for calling you back. It's in a matter of the highest consequence.

Hum. (*ironically, excited.*) Pray, don't apologize; don't apologize at all!

McDougal. I have had some experience, in my Congressional career, but this strikes me as about the coolest specimen of impudence that ever came under my observation.

Gov. W. (*to Sterling.*) You could not have come more opportunely, to unmask an incendiary, cut-throat, and audacious imposter!

Hum. (*as above.*) You could not have come more opportunely, Sir, — by no possibility more opportunely, Sir.

McDougal. The fellow's brass challenges even my admiration.

Sterling. Unmask an imposter — I?

Mr. Oli. Yes, sir. Think for a moment. A notorious abolitionist and free lover has had the audacity to introduce himself here, —

Hum. (*as above.*) Think for a moment, sir!

Gov. W. — In order to invade Virginia, destroy all our domestic institutions, murder our whole white population, —

Mr. Oli. And run off with my negro, Sambo.

Hum. (*as above.*) Only think of it!

McDougal. There never was such pyramidal impudence! (*aside*) The fellow surpasses *me*!

Sterling. Gentlemen, — are you quite sure that such were the wretched man's objects?

Hum. (*enraged.*) The wretched man! I to be called a wretched man, by you! (*shaking his fist at Sterling.*) I, who am proverbially the most conservatory, unswervatory, Union preservatory statesman of the Union, to be treated as a wretched man! Why, he is really unique — this new-fangled friend of the Union and Constitution. (*hysterically to the bystanders.*) Is n't he really unique?

Gov. W. Silence! imposter. (*to Sterling.*) This wretch, sir, has introduced himself here, under what name do you imagine, sir?

Hum. (*ironically.*) Under what name do you imagine, sir, indeed!

Sterling. I really am unable to guess.

Gov. W. Under the name of the Honorable Anodyne Humdrum!

Mr. Oli. What do you think of that, Sir?

Hum. What do you think of that? I should really like to know, Sir!

Sterling. Well, in truth I must say, it is a matter of great indifference to me.

McDougal. A magnanimous answer, I own.

Mr. Oli. Sir, your character assumes, from moment to moment, proportions more and more classical in the eyes of an admiring posterity.

Hum. Colossal proportions, Sir!

Sterling. I am at a loss to account for the reason posterity could have for its admiration in this special instance.

Mr. Oli. What beautiful modesty! A second Washington!⁴¹

Hum. I ask the floor for a personal explanation.

Gov. W. You have to make no explanations whatsoever here, whether personal or impersonal.

Hum. (*crying aloud.*) I ask the floor for a personal explanation; I am the second Washington.

Sterling. (*aside.*) He's surely crazy. (*to Humdrum appeasingly, as to a child.*) You *are*, Sir. Undoubtedly you are the Honorable Anodyne Humdrum and the second Washington.

Mr. Oli. (*the same.*) For sure, you are the Honorable Anodyne Humdrum and the second Washington.

All. (*in derision.*) There's no doubt about it, he's the Honorable Anodyne Humdrum and the second Washington.

McDougal. And you're going to be our next president. Ha, ha, ha!

All. You are going to be our next president. Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!

Hum. (*mimicking them, furiously.*) Ha, ha, ha! Hi, hi, hi! You're poking fun at me, are you?

Gen. C. That's exactly what we are doing: *poking* fun at you. (*Pricks Humdrum's legs with his sword.*)

All. (*do the same.*) Poking! Poking fun! Poking!

Hum. (*lifting his legs alternately.*) The — U — ni — on — must — and — shall — be — pre — ser — ved!

Sterling. Gentlemen, I protest, this was not my meaning when I tried to humor the unfortunate man's hallucination. Let him have a fair trial to see whether he is crazy or whether he is actually an imposter.

Hum. (*beside himself.*) Whether I am crazy or whether I am actually an imposter? (*with sombre resignation.*) It is the madness of the times!

Snarles. He's had his trial.

Tawney. He's a convicted convict.

Hum. I have had no trial. I have been convicted on circumstantial evidence of the most flimsy —

Tawney. Circumstantial, indeed! A great deal too circumstantial, I declare. If we had hung him first and taken the evidence about the circumstances afterwards, we would not have all this circumstantiality now.

Hum. That's what you wanted, I know. That's what I was enticed for into this pitfall. Ah! now I see through it all. This professional Burkite (*pointing to Olivebranch*) allures me away from the safe shelter of my Northern home, by an appeal to my virtuous passion for saving the Union.⁴² To entrap me the surer, he calls up before my eyes beguiling visions of connubial bliss; my arrival is watched for by these Vigilantals, who menace me with the protection of Southern Law and Order upon my person. Flying for refuge under the wings of a treacherous hospitality, I find myself in a den of horrors; I am made the object of an illicit kiss in the dark, and of a negro insurrection, raised on purpose to dispatch me "sleeping, by a brother's hand," of life, of presidential crown, of lady-love, at once.⁴³ Adding insult to injury, this fiend (*pointing to Olivebranch*) in the outward form of a respectable Constitutional Union-loving merchant, accuses me of having run off with his negro Sambo. The glorious name of Humdrum is denied me, and my constitutional overcoat, my last prospect of bringing this horrible catastrophe to a triumphant conclusion is cruelly withheld from my Union-loving back. A fanatical garment, devoid alike of statesmanlike cut and patriotic proportions, is surreptitiously substituted in its place. Ah! now I see it! I see through it all. It is a deep-laid gunpowder plot, to blow up the whole Constitutional Union Party with one blow, by striking off its head.⁴⁴ You want my head. Here it is. Take it, cut it off, preserve it in alcohol and put it in Prof. Agassiz's museum, among the fossil remains, together with our great Boston Bell, and the two great names engraved upon the latter.⁴⁵ For unless you preserve them and me in alcohol, I see no longer any chance of our surviving the present campaign. But, if *we* do not survive, how can our cherished Union be preserved? Yet: *the Union must and shall be preserved!*

Tawney. (*taking Humdrum by his collar.*) And the law enforced.

Crowd. (*applauding.*) And the law enforced. Judge Tawney, enforce the law!

Sterling. (*mounts on Gov. Whizz's box.*) Gentlemen, the law must be enforced, but I see no necessity of enforcing it precisely after Judge —, what's the gentleman's name?

Crowd. Judge Tawney!

Sterling. — There's no necessity, I say, of enforcing the law in this country, after Judge Tawney's construction. The gentleman (*pointing to Humdrum*) complains, if I understand him rightly, of having been convicted on the evidence of an overcoat, which, he says, does not belong to him. —

Hum. Exactly so; on the evidence of a supposititious garb.

Sterling. Did the gentleman ever try on the coat in question?

Hum. I never thought of that.

Crowd. We never thought of that.

Tawney. It would be a species of evidence altogether too circumstantial for our Southern courts.

Sterling. Well, it seems to me that that ought to have been the very first thing. If I had to prove for life that this coat which I wear over my arm was not my own but another man's coat, why, the very first thing I should do would be to try it on, for the chance of an ocular demonstration that it did not fit me and was never intended for me.

(*EMILY and SALLY gesticulate at the window to express that the truth flashes upon them, then disappear.*)

Hum. (*hesitating, aside.*) If that be not another snare to entrap our party?

Gov. W. Go on, criminal, try your coat!

Crowd. Go on. He hesitates. He's convicted.

Sterling. Now just go on, Sir. Take your coat, Sir, (*suiting the action to the word, followed by Humdrum,*) put your left arm through its left sleeve, put your right arm through its right sleeve, and show yourself to the public in your fit.

EMILY and SALLY rush through the crowd.

Emily. Don't, Frank!

Sally. Don't, Massa!

Sterling. Why, what's this? This is not my coat.

(*A pause. — HUMDRUM and STERLING eye each other. — The crowd burst into cheers and laughter, while HUMDRUM and STERLING are turning slowly round on their boxes so as to present themselves gradually on every side in a ridiculous fit. — Finally HUM. and STERLING eye each other again.*)

Sterling. I believe the gentleman is sporting *my* overcoat.

Hum. I believe the gentleman has adorned himself with *my* wearing apparel.

Sterling. Let me see.

Hum. Let me try.

(*Exchange coats through SNARLES, who passes from box to box.*)

Sterling. (*puts on his coat.*) It is mine.

Hum. (*the same.*) It's my own.

Mr. Oli. Oh, what an old ass was I!

Hum. Yes, sir.

Emily. Oh, what a foolish girl was I!

Sally. Yes, Missus.

Snarles (*pointing to Sterling.*) Then, *this* is the bloody abolitionist!

McDougal. Then, *this* is the higher-law fanatic!

Gov. W. Then, *this* is the Northern invasion!

Tawney. Then, *this* one is going to be hanged!

Mr. Oli. Yes, hang him! I ask it — as an uncle, a man, and a patriot!

Hum. (*brandishing his night cap.*) Hang him! I ask it as damages for my sufferings.

McDougal. Hang him! Hang the whole Republican party, — or else they'll hang you and me!

Gov. W. Homespun, my guards! — there's the Northern invasion! Put it down!

(*The Guards and crowd, headed by GOV. WHIZZ and McDUGAL, form around STERLING. — Drum beats rapidly, then stops short.*)

Emily. (*placing herself before Sterling.*) Not but over my body!

Sally. (*gets before Emily.*) Leabe my missus 'lone, I tell yer! or else ye'll fin' me more terrible dan dat African li'ness 'fending dem yer cubs!

GUARDS *and* CROWD *hesitate.*

Sterling. Stand back, gentlemen! I came here on a lawful errand of a private nature, not as an invader. You are but haunted by the nightmare visions of an evil conscience in imputing to the people of the North designs of invading your soil, or interfering in a hostile manner with your concerns. It is not you but *we* who are interfered with. The slave-power having taken possession of our national government, wherever the flag of the Union waves, the safeguards of our liberty are secretly undermined or openly broken through, its principles cynically derided, its defenders insulted, persecuted, struck down. And unless the Union be thus continued and confirmed as a cover for the spread of despotic practices and the degradation and corruption of liberty, you threaten to separate from it. And it is in this demand that the wretches who affect to monopolize the love of our country and the respect for its institutions vie with each other to encourage you. Gentlemen, they treat you like spoiled children, whose irritation must be appeased by ever new concessions to the ever increasing demands of an imperious temper. *We*, on our part, propose to treat you as men. We owe it to you not less than to ourselves to make a stand upon our dignity as men, and upon our principles as freemen; to preserve intact the

institutions and the area consecrated to liberty by our fathers; nor to allow one further inch of either moral or territorial ground to be diverted from the legitimate uses of human progress and civilization. Do you understand, gentlemen? Not one inch! That is *our* platform. Upon it we make our stand, be the consequences what they may.

Hum. Treason! Horror! Civil war! Pirates in every bay! The borders drenched in brothers' blood!

Tawney. Go and hide your face, you whining old babbler! I like to hear a *man* talk — next to have him hung. (*Humdrum creeps from his box and hides himself behind it.*)

Emily. (*taking Sterling's hand.*) Our fathers stood by the right, did their duty, and trusted to eternal justice to right the consequences.

Sterling. (*descending from the box.*) Gentlemen, make room if you please, to let us pass.

Gov. W. and McDougal. Open your ranks, gentlemen, to let the Republicans pass. (*The semi-circle opens wide; STERLING and EMILY pass out between the WHIZZ and MCDUGAL ranks.*)

Sally. (*stands looking after them until they disappear.*) Missus, whar yer goes I'll go, and whar I goes Sambo 'll go. (*Rushes out after them.*)

Tawney. Well, but who's to be hanged now?

HUMDRUM tries to escape unobserved.

Mr. Oli. Hold on, Sir.

Snarles. (*stops Humdrum.*) Just stop a bit, Sir; not so fast!

Hum. Is your thirst after my blood not yet quenched?

Tawney. First we'll hang you; after which there will be plenty of time to quench our thirst after your blood.

Mr. Oli. Where's my negro Sambo?

Hum. Am I my brother's keeper?⁴⁶

Mr. Oli. You have kidnapped him.

All. He has kidnapped him.

Gov. W. Then, let the law be enforced.

McDougal. That's it. The *law* is the great principle.

Hum. Gentlemen, could not you possibly adopt some other plan with regard to me, than enforcing the law upon me?

Mr. Oli. No, Sir. The Union must and shall be preserved, and —

All. — And the law enforced.

Hum. Now look, gentlemen, I'll do whatsoever you please. I'll abjure Daniel Webster if it can't be helped; I'll renounce all the proprieties of society; I'll surrender every right, privilege or duty, municipal, political or human, — only don't you enforce the law upon me after your construction.⁴⁷

Snarles. I appeal to the Union-loving, law-abiding sense of this community, whether this is not rank abolitionism?

Hum. Gentlemen, I did not kidnap that negro.

Mr. Oli. Then, where is he?

All. Yes, where?

Sambo. (*peeping out from his box.*) I is here! (*Runs up the ladder with his bundle.*)

Hum. (*runs up the ladder after him.*) The Union must and shall be preserved!

Sambo. Don't yer cum up here an' kidnap Massa Olibranch's nigger, yer dam blutioniss, I'll tell yer. (*Pounds Humdrum's head with his bundle.*)

Gov. W. Come down from the ladder, Sir, or I'll transfix you. (*Pokes with his sword after him.*)

All. (*throwing hats and other innocent missiles.*) Come down from that ere ladder, Sir!

Hum. Governor, why do you transfix me? I'll save the Union for you, when I am President.

McDougal. (*poking him.*) Can't he get rid of that preposterous notion? He's always coming back upon the Presidency!

Hum. Well, then, I won't be President; — only keep off your law enforcer there from my legs.

Gov. W. I want you to retire from public life altogether. (*Poking him vigorously.*)

Hum. Well, then, I will retire from public life altogether.

McDougal. You and your whole party.

Hum. I and my whole party. We'll save the Union, as private citizens.

Gov. W. I don't want you to save the Union.

Hum. Well, then, I won't save the Union! Only, pray, Governor, don't you again enforce the law in that way! I'll maintain and spread slavery for you, by the force of my private example.

Gov. W. That's our own business. You sha n't maintain or spread anything at all.

Hum. Well, then, I won't maintain or spread anything at all.

Gov. W. I want you to evaporate entirely, and altogether!

Hum. I'll evaporate, then, entirely and altogether.

Gov. W. (*to crowd.*) Make room there, if you please, to let the gentleman evaporate!

(*The crowd open a passage-way, while Humdrum descends from the ladder.*)

McDougal. (*aside.*) I guess I'd better take this opportunity of evaporating, too! (*Takes his carpet-bag and gets behind Humdrum.*)

Mr. Oli. (*lachrymose.*) Evaporation seems the only remaining prospect, now, for the Constitutional Union party! (*Places himself behind McDougal.*)

Sambo. Vere young gemman goes, Missus goes. Vere Missus goes, Sally goes. Vere Sally goes, I goes. And vere I goes, Massa goes! (*Placing himself ostentatiously before Mr. Olivebranch. They are all in single file.*)

Tawney. Well, but who is going to be hanged, now?

Snarles. Hang yourself!

Tawney. (*chopfallen.*) Why did n't I think of that before? — (*About to go.*)

Hum. Join our new coalition party, Tawney.

McDougal. Do. It's just the same as hanging!

Tawney. That's a fact! Come, Jim. (*Joins the file.*)

Snarles. (*gets behind Tawney.*) Well, here goes! (*to audience.*) Ain't WE a precious fine set! Eh?

Gov. W. I'm going to fight in the Union now! (*Fights the air to the end, while the file marches off, the band playing Yankee Doodle, and car-bells ringing, &c.*)⁴⁸

[CURTAIN FALLS.]

The following addition is suggested: —

Cars are seen passing, with EMILY and SALLY waving their handkerchiefs from the windows. — STERLING is on the platform, waving a flag inscribed "The Union must and shall be preserved!" — HUMDRUM and his crew rush to STERLING, who repulses them, except SAMBO, who gets on top of the car and performs derisive motions to HUMDRUM and McDOUGAL, with his digits at the end of his nose.

Notes

¹ Reinhold Solger, *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum; or, The Union Must and Shall be Preserved: A Farce, in Two Acts* (Boston: Stacy & Richardson, 1860). Subsequent references to this play are cited in the body of this paper using the abbreviation *H* and the page numbers. Reinhold Solger, *Der Reichstagsprofessor: Posse in einem Akt*, in *Deutsche Monatsschrift für Politik, Wissenschaft, Kunst und Leben* 1 (1850): 59–84; also in Horst Denkler, ed., *Der deutsche Michel: Revolutionskomödien der Achtundvierziger* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971), 389–429. Subsequent references to this play are cited in the body of this paper using the abbreviation *R* and the page numbers from Denkler's edition. All translations are my own. I would like to thank Lynne Tatlock and Matt Erlin for including this article in their volume; I am particularly indebted to Lynne for many thought-provoking conversations about Reinhold Solger's plays. I am also grateful to Ortwin Knorr (Willamette University) for his help with German and English locutions and literary references.

² For biographical information on Reinhold Solger (1817–1866), see Friedrich Kapp, *Aus und über Amerika. Thatsachen und Erlebnisse* (Berlin: Julius Springer,

1876), 1:356–80; Milton Allan Dickie, “Reinhold Solger” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1930); Horst Denkler, “Die Schule des Kapitalismus: Reinhold Solger,” in *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur: Neue Welt — Nordamerika — USA*, ed. Sigrid Bauschinger, Horst Denkler, and Wilfried Malsch (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), 108–23. For a discussion of the uprising in Baden, see Irmtraud Götz von Olenhusen and Alfred Georg Frei, “‘Der Tag der Freiheit ist angebrochen’: Strukturen und Biographien aus der badischen Revolution 1848/49,” in *1848/49: Revolution der deutschen Demokraten in Baden*, ed. Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe (Baden-Baden: NOMOS, 1998), 13–26, 301, 323, 361. For accounts of the revolution and counterrevolution of 1848–1849, see David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780–1918* (New York: Oxford UP, 1998), 138–73, 225–42; Theodor Schieder, *Vom Deutschen Bund zum Deutschen Reich*, vol. 15 of *Gebhardt Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte* (Munich: Ernst Klett, 1970), 79–113; Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1880–1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1983), 595–673.

³ Sibylle Obenaus, *Literarische und politische Zeitschriften 1848–1880* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1987), 43. Solger, like most contributors to the journal, was a democrat. Generally described in the mid-nineteenth century as radicals on the far left end of the political spectrum, democrats demanded liberal rights such as freedom of the press, trial by jury, a national parliament based on popular sovereignty, and a unified Germany. Peter Wende, “Demokraten,” in *Lexikon zu Demokratie und Liberalismus 1750–1848/49*, ed. Helmut Reinalter (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993), 64–66.

⁴ Jürgen Jahn, ed., *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Gottfried Keller und Hermann Hettner* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1964), 43.

⁵ Denkler, *Der deutsche Michel*, 18.

⁶ According to Kapp, Solger was not particularly effective while campaigning for Lincoln in Indiana, due to his abstract and dry manner of speech and his aristocratic appearance (*Aus und über Amerika*, 370). See Carl Wittke, “The Slavery Issue,” in *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952), 191–202; James M. Bergquist, “The Forty-Eighters: Catalysts of German-American Politics,” in *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation between Two Cultures 1800–2000*, ed. Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 22–36.

⁷ Eleven plays by Aristophanes (ca. 445–ca. 385 B.C.) have survived. Solger shares his use of exaggeration, parody, and satire, and his penchant for offering commentary on contemporary personalities, events, and institutions, including aspects of democratic politics.

⁸ Kapp, *Aus und über Amerika*, 368–69. In the 1850s, African-American actors did not perform in theaters patronized by a largely white public. When a play such as Shakespeare’s *Othello* or George L. Aiken’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* required a black character, a white actor performed the role. The role of Uncle Tom, for example, was not performed by an African-American until 1878, twenty-six years after the premiere. See Thomas J. Brown, ed., *American Eras: Civil War and Reconstruction 1850–1877* (Detroit: Manly, 1997), 40; Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America 1800–1850: The Shadow of a Dream* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981), 90–91.

⁹ Jerry Schuchalter, "Reinhold Solger's *Bildungsreise* to the New World: The Immigrant Intellectual on Trial in America," in *Crossing Scholarly Borders: Interdisciplinary Studies of Language, Literature, and Culture* (Vaasa: Vaasan Yliopisto, 1993), 13.

¹⁰ Horst Denkler mentions in "Schule des Kapitalismus" (122) that he could not locate Solger's English-language play in Germany or the United States. I would like to thank Fred Bauman, Manuscript Reference Specialist at the Library of Congress, for sifting through Solger's papers (which are not individually catalogued) to help me locate this play.

¹¹ Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 670–73.

¹² Karl Biedermann (1812–1901) associated first with the center-left and then with the center-right. For an explanation of the historical references in this play, see Denkler, *Der deutsche Michel*, 520–26.

¹³ Denkler, *Der deutsche Michel*, 520–21.

¹⁴ On the preponderance of academics in the German National Assembly, see Schieder, *Vom Deutschen Bund zum Deutschen Reich*, 86–87; Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, transl. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998), 24–25.

¹⁵ Denkler, *Der deutsche Michel*, 18.

¹⁶ For an account of events leading up to the Civil War, see David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis 1848–1861*, ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1976).

¹⁷ The Constitutional Union Party drew its members from old-line Whigs and nativist Know-Nothings. Concerned at the growing sectionalism and fearing secession, the party put forth a weak platform that supported slavery but gave priority to preserving the Union. John Bell (1797–1869), the party's presidential candidate in 1860, was a U.S. senator from the border state of Tennessee (1847–1859). Conceding that Congress had the right to prohibit slavery in the territories, Bell supported the Compromise of 1850 and opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In 1860 he carried the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia but received only 12.6 percent of the total votes; he managed to keep Tennessee in the Union until the firing on Fort Sumter. Bell's party dissolved at the beginning of the Civil War; although he advised resisting the Union invasion, Bell took no active part in the war. The Republican Party was founded by Northern Whigs, members of the anti-slavery Free Soil Party, dissident Democrats, and nativist Know-Nothings critical of Irish Catholic immigrants in the United States.

¹⁸ This slogan recalls a toast made by Andrew Jackson (1767–1845), seventh President of the United States (1829–1837), in honor of Thomas Jefferson's birthday celebration on 13 April 1830: "Our Federal Union: it must be preserved."

¹⁹ Vigilance Committees, formed by abolitionists in the North and South, protected and assisted fugitive slaves.

²⁰ Albert Bermel, *Farce: A History from Aristophanes to Woody Allen* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 33.

²¹ "Old Dominion" was the nickname given to Virginia by King Charles II for its loyalty during England's civil war (1642–1649). The state is the birthplace of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

²² Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 486–87.

²³ “Sambo” suggests the servile mentality thought to characterize black American slaves. Gov. Whizz’s views bear a striking similarity to those of Jefferson Davis (1808–1889), a United States senator from Mississippi who would become president of the Confederate States (1861–1865). In the nineteenth century, “whizz” was an American slang expression for an agreement or bargain; it is also slang for urination. “Cockup,” which describes the character’s eagerness to cock his weapon (to draw back the hammer prior to firing), also has vulgar connotations. It can also mean foul-up, a mess. Snarles’s name refers to a tangle or knot, but also to a snare or noose.

²⁴ The Lincoln-Douglas debates took place in 1858, during the senatorial race for Illinois. See David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 197–229.

²⁵ See Gerhild Scholz Williams, “New Country, Old Secrets: Heinrich Börnstein’s *Die Geheimnisse von St. Louis*,” in this volume. Also Brent O. Peterson, “How (and Why) to Read German-American Literature,” in *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation between Two Cultures 1800–2000* (see note 6), 88–102.

²⁶ My forthcoming English edition and translation of *Anton in Amerika* will appear as the third volume in the series *New Directions in German American Studies* (Peter Lang Publishing), which is edited by Werner Sollors.

²⁷ See Gerhard Weiss’s contribution to this volume, “The Americanization of Franz Lieber and the *Encyclopedia Americana*.”

²⁸ Werner Sollors, “Introduction: After the Culture Wars; or, From ‘English Only’ to ‘English Plus,’” in *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: New York UP, 1998), 1–13.

²⁹ William M. Wiecek, “Roger B. Taney,” in *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, ed. Paul S. Boyer (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), 761.

³⁰ The following excerpt reproduces as closely as possible the orthography, punctuation, and format of the original publication, except in cases of obvious spelling or punctuation errors.

³¹ In scene 1 of act 2, Governor Whizz presents the ten Homespun who form his Guard — the men he pledges will bring the North into submission — as “the living product of our Southern spindles” and “the embodiment of the proud fact, that an entire company, consisting of ten men, has been supplied with raiment, by the unassisted but united efforts of the manufacturing enterprise of the South” (*H* 38). The officers’ uniforms, made of homespun, are comically ill-fitting and the men are barefoot, except for one person wearing one shoe. Whizz views these uniforms not as a poor reflection on Southern industrial production, but rather as evidence of the breach in communication with Massachusetts, the major center of textile and shoe production in the United States during the 1850s.

³² Gov. Whizz’s exaggerated promises to wage war against and build alliances with countries on five continents, for the purpose of spreading “the blessings of slavery to the utmost limits of the earth” (*H* 48), reflect in part the Democratic Party’s

commitment, in the 1850s, to the aggressive program of territorial acquisition known as Manifest Destiny. In October 1854 the U.S. ministers to Spain, Great Britain, and France drafted the Ostend Manifesto, a plan for acquiring Cuba by purchase or by force. That same year, the Canadian Reciprocity Treaty granted the United States fishing privileges off the coast of the Maritime Provinces and gave the British privileges along the shores of the United States to the thirty-sixth parallel. After the Fugitive Slave Act became law in 1850, moreover, many former slaves fled to Canada. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1808–1873) was exiled to the United States in late 1836, after staging an unsuccessful military coup in Strasbourg. He left for Switzerland after a few months, but French opposition induced him to move to England in 1838. He returned to France after the revolution in February 1848 and became president of the Second Republic in December 1848. Once emperor (1852–1870), Napoleon III rebuilt Paris, a project that included the construction of railways. In 1828 merchants in Baltimore organized the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, an early symbol of competition between northern and southern states. They hoped the railroad would help them retain their share of trans-Allegheny trade, which the Erie Canal threatened to draw entirely to New York.

³³ In 1852 President Fillmore sent Commodore Matthew C. Perry to Japan, a country that had been almost entirely closed to foreigners since the early seventeenth century. Perry secured the Treaty of Kanagawa in March 1854, which permitted American vessels to trade in the harbors of Shimoda and Hakodate.

³⁴ Hinton Rowan Helper (1829–1909), author of *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It* (1857), called for the abolition of slavery, not out of empathy for slaves, but because he felt slavery slowed the economic development of the South and limited the opportunities of its non-slaveholding white majority. The book, which was banned in the South, unleashed a controversy that contributed to the polarization of opinions on the slavery issue.

³⁵ The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, founded in 1853, served as an apolitical solution to a conflict that had arisen between those who wanted the state of Virginia to purchase and preserve George Washington's home and those who opposed this move because of sectional animosities. The Association conducted a national fund-raising campaign and purchased the site in 1858; during the Civil War both sides agreed to preserve Mount Vernon as neutral ground. Jean B. Lee, "Mount Vernon," *The Oxford Companion to United States History* (see note 29).

³⁶ At the end of act 1 Humdrum dreams that the spirit of Liberty appears to him; when he later claims that the apparition nearly smothered him with her cap, Tawney warns him "not to dream of the genius of Liberty, while you are here in Virginia" (H 33). Convinced that Humdrum is an abolitionist, Tawney, Snarles, and others begin to "play the genius of liberty" by pulling his hat down over his face. The allegorical female figure of Liberty was often depicted by artists of the French Revolution as carrying a torch and wearing the traditional red Phrygian cap, a conical cap with the top bent forwards. Originally worn by Roman slaves when they were freed, the cap became a symbol of liberty. See Nanine Vallain's "La Liberté" (1793–94) in: Marie-Louise von Plessen and Berliner Festspiele GmbH, eds., *Marianne und Germania 1789–1889; Frankreich und Deutschland:*

Zwei Welten — Eine Revue (Berlin: Argon, 1996), 38; also Eugène Delacroix's painting "La Liberté guidant le peuple" (Liberty Leading the People), painted in July 1830.

³⁷ Southern Democrats often used the term "black republicans" to deride supporters of black equality.

³⁸ The Free Soil Party (1845–1854) opposed the extension of slavery into U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. At a national meeting in 1852 party members nominated Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire as their presidential candidate, but he did poorly in the election. See also note 17.

³⁹ Spiritualism, a quasi-mystical movement with three components (the séance, the trance of the medium, and the asking of questions through the medium to spirits), began in New York in 1848 and quickly spread throughout the United States. Named after F. A. Mesmer (1733–1815), mesmerism is hypnosis induced through animal magnetism. Quakerism refers to the Christian religious organization also known as the Society of Friends, founded in England by George Fox (1624–1691) in the 1640s; Quakers first arrived in North America in 1656. The followers of this faith refuse to bear arms; many Quakers became involved with the early antislavery movement. Mormonism pertains to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, founded in the United States in 1830 by Joseph Smith (1805–1844). Theodore Parker (1810–1860) was a Unitarian clergyman, theologian, and radical abolitionist. Solger presented his last public lecture in the spring of 1861 in Parker's church (Kapp, *Aus und über Amerika*, 376).

⁴⁰ Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) served as the sixteenth president of the United States (1861–1865). In 1858 he was nominated by the new Republican Party for the U.S. Senate; he denounced the expansion of slavery in seven debates with his Democratic opponent, Stephen A. Douglas. Lincoln won the presidency with only 39 percent of the popular vote; he was inaugurated just weeks before the start of the Civil War.

⁴¹ George Washington (1732–1799) assumed command of the Virginia Regiment in the fall of 1755 and spent the next four years defending Virginia's western frontier from the French. By the time he was elected to the First Continental Congress in 1774, he had already become a prominent Virginian political leader. The first members of the Constitutional Union Party met on the anniversary of Washington's birthday in 1860, issuing an address that denounced the two existing political parties and appealed for the cause of the Union.

⁴² William Burke and William Hare, Irish immigrants working as laborers in Edinburgh in the late 1820s, first robbed graves and then committed murder in order to sell corpses to a doctor. Burke was hanged for his crimes in 1828.

⁴³ "Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand / Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd: / Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin, / Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled": lines spoken by the ghost of Hamlet's father in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, act I, v, 74–77.

⁴⁴ James I (1566–1625), king of England and Ireland (1603–1625), reconfirmed anti-Catholic laws that had been passed during the reign of Elizabeth I, prompting a small group of Catholic extremists to smuggle gunpowder into the basement of

the Houses of Parliament. Guy Fawkes, the main perpetrator of the plot, was to ignite the gunpowder on 5 November 1605 and thus kill the King and all members of the Parliament. The conspiracy was betrayed and the perpetrators were arrested and executed.

⁴⁵ Louis Agassiz (1807–1873), born in Switzerland, came to the United States in 1846 to lecture on zoology; he received a full professorship from Harvard in 1850. His greatest legacy was the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University (known as “the Agassiz Museum”), founded in 1859. Mary Pickard Winsor, “Louis Agassiz,” *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, ed. Paul S. Boyer (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), 15. As far as I am able to determine, the “Boston Bell” refers to the largest and most famous bell cast by Paul Revere; it hangs in King’s Chapel in Boston, where Agassiz was married and many of his associates were active. I thank Mary Sears, Ernst Mayr Library of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, for this information.

⁴⁶ Gen. 4:9.

⁴⁷ Daniel Webster (1782–1852), a celebrated orator, was active in the Federalist and later the Whig party; he served as senator from Massachusetts (1827–1841, 1845–1850) and secretary of state (1841–1843, 1850–1852). Although he argued in 1830 that the Constitution of the United States had created a perpetual union of one people, he angered abolitionists in 1850 with his endorsement of the Fugitive Slave Act.

⁴⁸ Although conflicting accounts exist as to the origin of the song “Yankee Doodle,” we know that Dr. Richard Schuckburgh, a British surgeon, wrote the verses familiar to us today. The song originally ridiculed the colonists fighting in the French and Indian War (1754–1760), and British troops sang it to make fun of the American colonists during the Revolutionary War. In time, however, it became the colonists’ own anthem.